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ABSTRACT

This report reacting to three papers presented at the conference on compensatory education with special reference to Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 focuses on a series of topics pertaining to the relationship between compensatory education and regular education. The report begins by summarizing the conclusions of the three papers. Next it explores possible relationships between compensatory education and regular education, and draws a distinction between the commonalities shared by most American schools on the one hand and "effective regular education" on the other. Then the report considers the following three approaches for relating compensatory education resources to regular education and the promise of each for creating the conditions required for all students to learn certain basic skills: (1) compensatory education as remediation; (2) compensatory education as an alternative program; and (3) compensatory education as an integral part of adaptive education. Finally, the paper comments on the various explanations offered by the conference as a whole as to why Chapter 1 has had only modest success, and considers two alternative implications for Federal leadership: an expansion of current program improvement activities; or a more far-reaching program of research, development, and dissemination, which incorporates current improvement activities, but challenges directly current beliefs and school structures. A list of references is appended. (PS)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPENSATORY EDUCATION AND REGULAR EDUCATION

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMPENSATORY EDUCATION AND REGULAR EDUCATION

Our task is to explore a significant number of compensatory education design issues over the course of our two-day meeting. The agenda moves us from specific issues related to who should be served, by whom, and in what setting, to broader issues about the relationship of compensatory education to regular education. My assignment is to react to the papers and issues associated with the latter topic.

To be more specific, three papers have been prepared for the session. The Allington and Johnston paper reviews studies which examined the status of curricular coordination at district and school levels, between categorical and regular education programs, and among categorical programs. It offers possible explanations for the general lack of such coordination--particularly, given some evidence that such coordination can enhance student achievement. It suggests that current policy is based on such assumptions as:

- There exist several identifiable categories of at-risk children.
- We can identify which child fits which category.
- Children in different categories have different instructional needs.

It argues that current research and experience do not support these assumptions and that the field needs an alternative set of assumptions--for example:

- The task of learning to read is the same for all students.
- Different students need differential opportunities to learn.
- Those opportunities can be provided within the framework of a balanced program.

It concludes with recommendations that Federal policy should:

- emphasize similarity of instructional needs of children served by categorical programs;
- present such programs to schools in a coordinated and coherent way; and

- o focus more on "service quality" than on keeping funds separate by programs.

It notes that major shifts in belief structures and in practice will have to occur before the goals of coordinated and coherent programs can be achieved.

The Griffin paper suggests that the purpose of Chapter 1 staff development resources should be to enhance the educational opportunities of Chapter 1 students. To achieve this end, it suggests that such staff development efforts should address knowledge and skills of not only Chapter 1 teachers, but of all teachers working with Chapter 1 students, and that such efforts should address not only instructional concerns, but those contextual aspects of classroom and school that influence how staff work with each other and with their students. It then describes several studies of school-level staff development interventions which have sought to strengthen the overall effectiveness of school and program.

The Hallinan paper presents a conceptual model for explaining variation in effectiveness of Chapter 1 programs. It suggests that explanations for such differences may be found in instructional process variables like content covered (e.g., time allocated and pace), quality of content (e.g., nature of tasks assigned and interest level of content presented), and quality of pedagogy; and in the nature and content of interactions among students--particularly, when they are separated into ability groups. It suggests that such a model can be used to structure future research and to identify practices most likely to foster Chapter 1 student achievement.

These papers address the session topic from quite different perspectives. To comment on those perspectives and how they interrelate, I decided that I had first to explore possible relationships between compensatory education and regular education. I have organized my comments into four sections. I begin by considering two referents for the concept of "regular education." I then examine three approaches for relating compensatory education resources to regular education, and the promise of each for creating the conditions required for all students to learn certain basic skills. I then consider possible implications of my comments for Federal leadership.

Regular Education

The term "regular education," can refer to the commonalities which most schools in America share--for example, most elementary schools organize their children into age-grade

groups which are further divided into classes of 25 to 30 children; they then provide each class with an all-purpose teacher; and, in turn, they provide their teachers with a collection of textbooks and related workbooks which, for the most part, define the school's curriculum. A number of studies have been conducted over the years aimed at describing such commonalities--for example, common organizational structures, curriculum and general instructional practices, or practices in specific content areas. The problem with this definition of regular education is that the commonalities described have not been linked to student outcomes.

As an alternative, I recommend a more restrictive construct, "effective regular education." This construct draws on the research over the past fifteen years that has described how student achievement can vary by classrooms within a school and by schools, and that has identified some of those conditions and practices that can be associated with such variation. Some of that research has gone beyond correlational findings to demonstrating through experiments that certain changes in classroom conditions and instructional practices can result in increased achievement. There is also now some evaluative evidence that school improvement interventions based on these results can help schools improve not only achievement, but other outcomes--for example, increased student attendance and reductions in disruptive student behaviors.

Figure VI-1 represents one way to summarize some of the results of current research. It suggests that students are more apt to learn what is measured by basic skills achievement tests if they:

- o attend school regularly;
- o study content and skills that are appropriate, given their current knowledge and skills, and that are assessed by the basic skills achievement tests;
- o are engaged in appropriate learning activities for most of the time allocated for instruction; and
- o experience a moderately high level of success in their daily work.

Figure VI-1 further suggests that students are more apt to have these experiences if they have teachers who:

- o have a well-developed classroom routine and have taught students how to follow that routine;
- o have a workable set of classroom rules which define appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, structure

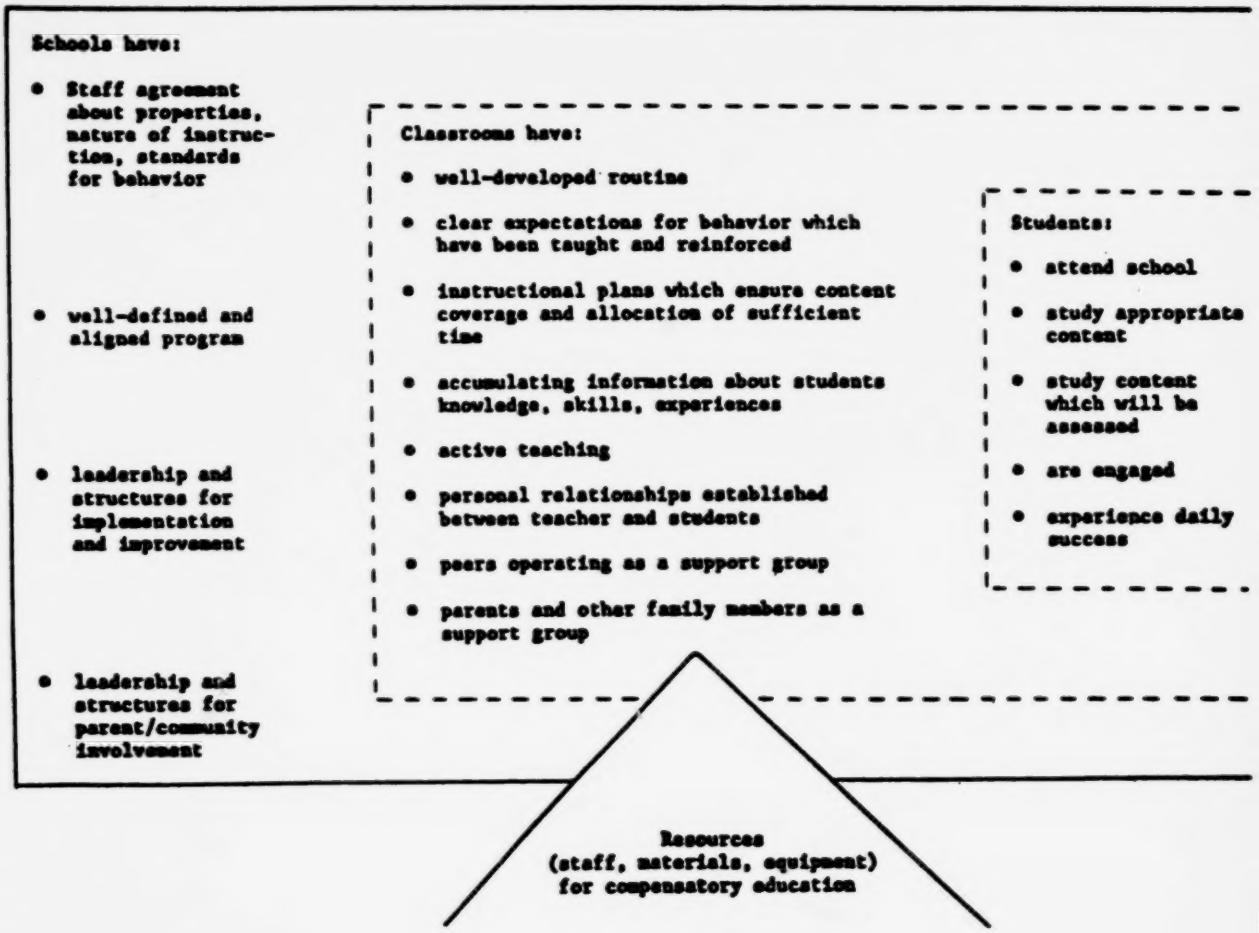
Schools have:
• Staff agreement about properties, nature of instruction, standards for behavior
• well-defined and aligned program
• leadership and structures for implementation and improvement
• leadership and structures for parent/community involvement
Classrooms have:
• well-developed routine
• clear expectations for behavior which have been taught and reinforced
• instructional plans which ensure content coverage and allocation of sufficient time
• accumulating information about students knowledge, skills, experiences
• active teaching
• personal relationships established between teacher and students
• peers operating as a support group
• parents and other family members as a support group
Students:
• attend school
• study appropriate content
• study content which will be assessed
• are engaged
• experience daily success
Resources
(staff, materials, equipment)
for compensatory education

Figure VI-1. Effective Regular Education

and monitor classroom activities to minimize inappropriate behaviors, and respond quickly and consistently to inappropriate behaviors without disrupting class activities or denigrating students;

- plan their year, their instructional units, and their lessons to ensure that important content/skills are covered (particularly, those to be assessed), and that sufficient time is allocated to those topics;

- inform their instructional planning by obtaining and regularly updating information about their students' current knowledge, skills, experiences, and learning styles;

- actively teach the content and skills to be learned by orienting students to the lesson and its objectives, presenting content and demonstrating procedures, providing opportunities to practice both under their guidance and independently, monitoring progress being made by students both individually and as a group, providing continual feedback to students on their progress, and adjusting pace, tasks, and instruction in order to ensure that students experience a moderately high level of success;

- develop personal and positive relationships with each student and communicate their belief that they will learn the content and skills presented;

- use peers as a support group by incorporating peer tutoring and cooperative learning activities into lessons and units; and

- involve parents and other family members as a support group by orienting them to the class' program and providing homework which encourages them to work with their child.

Figure VI-1, drawing on the effective schools research, further suggests that teachers will be more apt to plan, manage, and conduct their classes in these ways if there is:

- strong agreement among school staff about academic priorities, what constitutes effective instruction, what students should achieve, how students should behave, and how time should be spent;

- a well-defined and aligned program which describes the content and skills to be learned, provides instructional resources and suggests instructional activities which can help students achieve those

objectives, and has tests and other tools for monitoring and assessing student progress in achieving those objectives;

- leadership and structures which support teacher implementation of the program, staff use of assessment data, and ongoing improvement of both the program and teaching (e.g., time for cooperative teacher planning, supervision, staff development); and

- leadership and structures which encourage and support parent involvement in support of the school's program.

Brophy's conference paper (for the preceding session) summarizes this research in much more detail. The three papers for this session all reference selected aspects of this research. For example, Griffin emphasizes the role of contextual/school factors and of structures through which staff can work on those factors (e.g., staff development); Allington and Johnston focus on the belief structure of administrators and teachers, the character of the program, and the extent there is leadership and structures for coordination/implementation; Hallinan's model attends to the character of teacher-student and peer relationships, teacher expectations and how they are communicated, the quality of instruction, and the amount of content covered.

Three Possible Relationships

Ideally, it is into the context of effective regular education that compensatory education resources (staff, instructional materials, and equipment) are introduced. There appear to be three general approaches to using these resources --each of which places compensatory education in a somewhat different relationship with effective regular education.

Compensatory Education as Remediation

"Compensatory education" as the remedial component of traditional basic skills programs is generally based on the following rationale:

- Each child's growth and development is unique.

- The learning of the basic skills is interrelated with a child's growth and development.

- An effective basic skills program tries to deal with this variability by such practices as grouping students, using different instructional materials with those groups, varying the pace at which content is covered, and providing corrective instruction for students who do not learn a skill as a result of the initial instruction.

- However, some student differences (e.g. intellectual development, social-emotional development, physical development, motivation, language, and experiential background) may be difficult to address in the context of the regular classroom.

- Therefore, those students are assigned to remedial classes when those differences can be addressed.

The remedial approach is based on the view that compensatory education compensates for certain inadequacies or disabilities found in students--inadequacies or disabilities that explain why students are not succeeding in regular education. From this perspective, compensatory education is expected to provide two services to regular education. It identifies student inadequacies, and it provides the additional instruction that will enable a student either to overcome them or to develop compensating strategies. The intent of the remediation is to enable the student to benefit fully from regular education.

To be effective, the remedial approach requires theories and technologies for describing student variability in ways which provide direction as to which instructional treatments would be most appropriate and effective, and second, it requires a pool of instructional treatments to deal with the types of student variability identified. Furthermore, this approach assumes close coordination of regular classroom and remediation instruction--coordination which enables teachers to develop a shared understanding of the status of an individual student's learning, to determine the content and function of remediation instruction, and to decide how regular instruction should build upon the learning resulting from that instruction.

Compensatory Education as Alternative Programs

Compensatory education as alternative programs is based on the assumption that some students just cannot succeed in the regular education program and that they require an alternative. The rationale for alternative programs can focus on the severity of the student's disability--that is, a special education perspective; it can focus on inflexibilities in the regular program--that is, the regular program's inability to

adapt content, tasks, pace, and setting to student differences; or it can focus on both.

Alternative programs take a variety of forms. They can be a short-term experience (e.g., a bridging year between kindergarten and first grade, a summer school program), or they can be alternatives for part of a school day (e.g., a basic skills center in a secondary school which has no formal basic skills program). They can also be comprehensive alternative programs (e.g., programs for disruptive youth or potential dropouts in a secondary school) that attempt to create a learning environment significantly different from that offered by the regular program.

The more short-term alternatives are designed to return students to the regular program; therefore, to be effective, they need to be coordinated with that program. The more comprehensive alternatives (usually found at the secondary level and only partially supported by compensatory education resources) are frequently preoccupied with just trying to help a student to be productive in an educational environment. The issue of re-entry and coordination are considered only when a student begins to show commitment to learning some of the more important contents and skills. It is interesting to note how descriptions of effective alternative programs echo some of the characteristics of effective schools and classrooms. They have:

- a staff who are committed to developing a warm, caring relationship with each student;
- a clear behavior code which students must adhere to if they are to continue in the program;
- objectives to help students develop formal or abstract thinking skills, and a sense of values and moral direction to their lives;
- a curriculum which is, at times, both problem-centered and experiential;
- an approach to instruction which includes both individualized and cooperative learning strategies; and
- a positive peer culture which has been deliberately developed through admissions procedures, reputations, explicit verbal commitments, use of peer support strategies, planned group activities, and clear group norms.

Compensatory Education as an Integral Part of Adaptive Education

The most radical approach to compensatory education is the adaptive education model. It seeks to integrate fully regular and compensatory education resources. As described by Glaser,

> The underlying assumption of adaptive instruction is that students learn in different ways and at different rates and, as a result, effective school programs require both the inclusion of a variety of instructional techniques and learning experiences that match the needs of each student and the allocation of adequate amounts of time for all students to learn. In adaptive instruction programs, the match between learning experiences and student needs is based on knowledge about each student's learning characteristics, his or her past performance and present level of competence, and the nature and type of learning tasks to be performed. The objective is to bring students' abilities into a range of competence that enhances their capabilities to profit from available learning alternatives. Thus, it is expected that by improving schools' adaptability and students' capabilities, every student will be provided with increased opportunities to succeed in school learning. (cited in Wang & Walberg, 1983, p. 604)

The Learning Research and Development Center (LRDC) of the University of Pittsburgh has tried to develop and implement such a model over the past ten years in a number of elementary schools. Its current model has five components:

- a basic skills curriculum component consisting of highly structured and hierarchically organized prescriptive learning activities, as well as a wide variety of more open-ended exploratory learning activities aimed at increasing schools' capabilities to accommodate individual students' learning needs and interests;

- an instructional-learning management system designed to maximize the use of available classroom and school resources (e.g., curricular materials and students' and teachers' time);

- a flexible grouping and instructional team system designed to increase the flexible use of teacher and student talents, time, and educational resources;

- a data-based staff development program providing written plans and procedures for increasing the capabilities of individual school staff to initiate and monitor the implementation; and

- a family involvement component aimed at optimizing student learning through increased communication and the integration of school and home learning experiences.

Johns Hopkins University's Center for Social Organization of Schools (CSOS) is working on a less elaborate model which combines features of mastery learning and cooperative student learning.

Relative Promise of the Three Designs

All of these designs are struggling with the same fundamental problem: how to configure scarce instructional resources to create the conditions required for all students to learn certain critical content and skills. The remediation approach basically accepts the structure and content of the regular program as givens and uses compensatory education resources to provide supplementary instruction to those students who need more intensive and personalized explanations, guidance, practice, and feedback to master the content of the regular program. From some of the evaluation results of Chapter 1, it could be inferred that this approach is most successful with students who are "moderately low achievers."

The alternative program approach views the regular program as inappropriate for selected students. It therefore uses compensatory education resources to create programs which differ from the regular program. Those differences may be in setting (e.g., small group, smaller teacher-student ratio), in content (e.g., prerequisite skills not covered in regular program), or in instructional activities (e.g., experiential, individualized, cooperative student learning). The promise of these alternatives is suggested by evaluations of some of the exemplary special education programs and by evaluations of secondary school programs for at-risk youth.

The adaptive education approach calls for radical transformation of regular education and the integration of regular and compensatory resources. It asks school staff to:

- accept student variability as a given and to develop an in-depth understanding of that variability;

- adopt as their goal the continual growth and development of all students;

- commit themselves to ensuring that all students experience a moderately high level of success in their daily work;

- develop a shared understanding of just what knowledge, skills, and dispositions students must acquire by the time they leave their school and to agree on just how they will monitor student progress on those goals and objectives;

- adopt a broader perspective of time (4 to 6 years), human resources (teachers, aides, parents, peers), and alternative routes through the content to be covered, in order to discover ways that they can adapt to student differences; and

- invest the time to develop and implement the practices required by the model, drawing on the knowledge and experience of such projects as the ones at LRDC and CSOS.

The promise of this approach is suggested by the results of studies conducted by LRDC and CSOS; however, the feasibility of widespread use of such an approach appears to be limited given the current culture, structure, and resources of schools.

Possible Implications for Federal Leadership

The papers for this session and the conference have suggested possible explanations for why Chapter 1 is having only a modest level of success. Some have focused on variables associated with the day-to-day experiences of Chapter 1 students in both regular and Chapter 1 classrooms (cf., Hallinan, Brophy); some have focused on the curriculum: what understandings, skills, and dispositions students should develop and the implications of those conceptions for instruction, instructional materials, and school organization (cf., Calfee, Romberg); some have focused on structures for helping staff both to implement and to improve the program, the quality of instruction, and the school (cf., Griffin); some have focused on the beliefs that leadership and staff at Federal, state, district, and school levels have about the nature of the problem and about how best to manage and use supplementary resources (cf., Allington and Johnston). That such a review of current research would provide such an array of explanations is not surprising, given the complexity of both the American education enterprise and the Chapter 1 program. To this review, I have added one way of thinking about alternative uses of compensatory education resources.

Given this summary of what current research provides, what alternatives are there for Federal leadership? From my perspective there are two: an expansion of current program improvement activities, or a more far-reaching program of research, development, and dissemination, which incorporates current improvement activities, but challenges directly current beliefs and school structures.

Expansion of Current Activities

Since 1982, Federal leadership has undertaken a number of activities to stimulate Chapter 1 program improvement. These have included:

- a one-year grants program to encourage states to design and initiate program improvement activities;
- a shift in the mission of the Chapter 1 Technical Assistance Centers to helping state and local staff design and implement program improvement activities; and
- the initiation of a Chapter 1 recognition program and the dissemination of information about the selected Chapter 1 projects and their "attributes for success."

From personal involvement in the first activity--namely, helping state Chapter 1 directors in the mid-Atlantic states plan and conduct a one-year project to design and implement a research and development based program improvement process, and providing follow-up assistance to the state of Pennsylvania, which is adapting and extending that process, I can offer these impressions.

- Chapter 1 projects within a state differ markedly in the level of growth they achieve with their Chapter 1 students, as measured by standardized achievement tests.
- Chapter 1 staff found the suggestions drawn from current effective schools and effective instruction research both interesting and reinforcing to current beliefs.
- Chapter 1 staff could be trained to collect information regarding the status of a number of factors drawn from the effective schools/effective instruction research and to use that information to identify areas for improvement.

- Based on the assessment phase of the improvement process, three areas in need of improvement were found across most of the low performing projects:

  — the selection and administration of achievement tests, and the use of data from those tests in instructional planning;

  — the extent to which there was a well-defined and aligned basic skills program which structures the work of both regular and Chapter 1 teachers; and

  — the extent to which there was leadership and structures (cooperative planning, supervision, staff development) to support implementation and ongoing improvement of the program by both regular and Chapter 1 teachers.

- State Chapter 1 leaders believe that they have no authority to observe or judge regular education instructional practices--even when Chapter 1 students are involved.

- State and local Chapter 1 leaders are preoccupied with compliance concerns and the fear of audit exceptions; they, therefore, are very conservative in how they use and manage Chapter 1 resources.

- Under current administrative and resource realities, it is difficult for states and local staff to sustain an improvement process over the several years required for initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.

- Under current administrative and resource realities, it is difficult for states to develop the technical assistance and training capability which is needed to support the implementation of an improvement process.

I have also had an opportunity to review the product of one of the other Federal program improvement activities--namely, the Chapter 1 National Identification Program. That product, Effective Compensatory Education Sourcebook (U.S. Department of Education, no date), summarizes much of the effective schools and effective instruction research, discussing such topics as the coordination of the regular school program and other special programs, professional development, leadership, and instructional practices like interactive teaching, ability grouping, mastery learning, and adaptive learning environments. It also provides descriptions of the Chapter 1 projects identified in 1985 to be worthy of special

recognition. Those descriptions highlight how those project reflect current research. Though most of the projects follow the remedial approach, there are examples of projects which are implementing the alternative program approach; though most of the projects focus on reading and mathematics outcomes, there appears in the descriptions and underlying concern with other outcomes (e.g., students' development of a positive self-concept). Overall, the Sourcebook conveys the impression that there are a significant number of Chapter 1 projects that are effectively using Chapter 1 resources to supplement their regular education programs in ways that benefit their educationally deprived students.

From the perspective of current research, these Federal improvement activities are positive steps. However, they are exceedingly modest--particularly, if the intent is to encourage all Chapter 1 projects to produce the kinds of outcomes found in the recognized projects. To achieve this end, Federal leadership needs to allocate more of its energy and discretionary resources to creating the conditions that will stimulate, support, and make effective state and local improvement efforts. Specifically, for example, Federal leadership could help state and local Chapter 1 leaders explore ways they can:

- o influence the nature and quality of the regular education program and instructional practice for Chapter 1 students;
- o increase the linkage between regular education instruction and the supplementary services funded by Chapter 1 resources;
- o balance more effectively their activities for monitoring compliance and their activities for improving program; and
- o develop procedures for managing Chapter 1 funds which increase the options regarding how they might be used to supplement the regular education program.

In addition, Federal leadership could more proactively encourage exchange among states about their program improvement activities and their effects, and provide more substantial incentives and resources for both strengthening current activities and extending them to other states.

A Far-Reaching Program of Research, Development, and Dissemination

There is implied in a number of the conference papers that improving the current models of regular compensatory education will not increase substantially the level of success that

schools are having with educationally deprived students. What I read between the lines is:

- The public schools are currently failing to teach large numbers of these students critical content and skills, and worse, they are contributing to the alienation of these students from the American society.

- The population of students from low-income/minority homes is increasing rapidly.

- The American society, as we know it, will not survive if the current level of student failure and alienation increases as the population of low-income minority students increases.

- To change the rate of failure, radical change is required in the current school practice and in the beliefs and assumptions upon which that practice is based.

From my perspective, there is growing consensus about the nature, scope, and importance of the problem (cf., May 14 issue of Education Week). What is less clear is in what direction schools should move and what knowledge is available to inform that move. Some of the conference papers suggest alternative beliefs and assumptions (e.g., Allington and Johnston, Calfee), some suggest new conceptions of what it it means to be literate and to know mathematics (e.g., Calfee, Romberg), and some suggest that more attention needs to be focused on the content and quality of the interaction in which teachers and students engage and on the kinds of instructional environments which shape and support those interactions (e.g., Hallinan). Whether such suggestions as these provide an alternative vision of how schools should work with educationally deprived students is for me the major task of the conference.

From the conference papers I have reviewed, I believe that we can produce such a vision and describe the knowledge which supports it. I further believe that such a vision could be the basis for a more far reaching Federal effort which moves beyond current modest improvement activities and involves the educational and research community in a collaborative effort to make schools places in which most educationally deprived students learn the content, skills, and dispositions required to be productive members of the American society.

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